

PONTESBURY PARISH COUNCIL
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held at The Pavilion
At 6:30pm on 6th January 2025

PRESENT

Cllr D Fletcher, Cllr A Hodges, Cllr M Trow, Cllr N Hignett, Cllr A Windows & Cllr D Jones

CLERK: RFO, C Higgins, Clerk D Marais

No members of the public were present.

FGP 31.24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Cllr S Davies and Cllr N Lewis

FGP 32.24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS - None

FGP 33.24 MINUTES OF COUNCIL -The minutes having been circulated with the agenda were taken as read. It was proposed by Cllr Trow and seconded by Cllr Hignett that the minutes be approved. All were in favour, and it was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 3rd October 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.**

FGP 34.24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS – No members of the public were present.

FGP 35.24 BANK CORRESPONDENCE –

35.1 CCLA – It was proposed by Cllr D Fletcher, seconded by Cllr N Hignett and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY to recommend that the RFO be added to the list of authorised signatories for the Public Sector Deposit Fund account** and to sign the Change of Signatory form in accordance with the bank mandate.

35.2 Lloyds Bank – It was **noted** that Lloyds will convert our Treasurer’s Account to a Business Account on 14th January 2025 and will charge an account management fee of £8.50/month plus transaction fees.

35.2 Lloyds Business Banking Resolution Service - It was **noted** that this service closed on 13 December 2024.

35.4 Nationwide – A reduction in interest rates was **noted** although the Council currently receives no interest due to the low balance in the account.

FGP 36.24 REVIEW OF DRAFT BUDGET – The RFO tabled a budget schedule together with explanatory notes for 2025-2026 showing a **recommended expenditure budget of £255,544** (compared to £251,413 in 2024-2025).

The Committee reviewed the budget on a line-by-line basis and noted an increase in employment costs of £9,604 due largely to increased national insurance contributions of approximately £8,000 arising from the recent budget. This increase had been offset by savings of £10,500 from the Pavilion budget, (which had been increased by £12,000 the previous year for carbon reduction measures). The budget included increased contributions to earmarked project reserves for refurbishments of the public toilets and play area, but it was noted there was no provision for a transfer to the General Reserve, which had received a top up of £15,000 from the Precept in 2024-2025, (total budget £266,413). Any unspent surplus in the current year will be added to the general fund.

The Committee noted an **increased income budget of £38,025** compared to the previous year's budget of £34,225. This reflected an anticipation that interest rates on savings and reserves would remain high for much of the year.

The RFO recommended that a Precept of **£217,519** be set for the year, (£255,544 expenditure - £38,025 income). This is £3,669 lower than the previous year.

The Committee noted that the tax base has been set by Shropshire Council as 1439.61, giving a **Band D precept of £151.10** (a saving of 2.59% against the previous annual charge of £155.11).

The Chair thanked the Clerk and RFO for preparing a budget and Precept at a lower cost than the previous year. Cllr M Trow observed that this had been achieved without compromising services or planned improvements to facilities. The Chair acknowledged that delivery of services to the planned budget was a team effort between the officers and members.

Cllr D Fletcher then proposed that the budget of £255,544 and Precept of £217,519 be recommended to full council for approval at the next meeting. He was seconded by Cllr M Trow, and it was resolved unanimously.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Date and time to be confirmed.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7:07pm having thanked the Officers and Committee for their input.

Signed
Chairman

Date